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single leaf on the hundred or so plants scattered for some distance along the railroad. The top soil had lately been removed by the section hands and these plants were growing on the south side of the track where the sun shone fairly upon them. Could this removal of the soil, and consequent bringing of the scaly bulbs nearer the surface have induced this very premature blooming? Or could any of the readers of the GAZETTE offer any other explanation in connection with the location of the plants? I expect to keep a watch over these plants this spring to see what they do when the ordinary time for blooming comes.

Hastings, Neb.

HARVEY THOMSON.

Solidago erecta PURSH.

The herbarium of the United States National Museum has for distribution a good number of duplicates of the above species, which has recently been reinstated by Dr. Gray [Proc. Am. Acad. XXII, p. 308]. This form, so well represented in the District of Columbia, has been variously referred by Dr. Gray to *S. bicolor* L., var. *concolor* Torr. & Gray, and *S. speciosa* Nutt., var. *angustata* Torr. & Gray, and may have been so distributed from here, but its distinctness from either of these forms has long been recognized by many Washington botanists.

F. H. KNOWLTON.

Assistant Curator Botany, U. S. Nat. Mus.

An aid in description.

In writing out descriptions it is important to have in mind the range of variations in the size of each organ. With microscopic objects this requires great familiarity with the specimens. A single figure, while it may be typical, can not show the range of variation. As an aid in making up descriptions, and to use for reference, tables like the following, which can be quickly made, have been found convenient. The vertical columns show the length in lines of each organ, while the horizontal rows show at a glance the amount of their variation. Other points can, of course, be added on the same plan, and the number of recorded observations be increased as circumstances require.

Muhlenbergia argentea Vasey. Palmer, Mexico, 1885, No. 160.

Lower empty glume.....	1½	1½	1½	1½	1
Upper empty glume.....	1½	1½	1½	1½	1½
Flowering glume.....	1½	1½	1½	1½	1½
Palet.....	2	1½	1½	1½	1½
Awn of flowering glume.....	5	5	4	2½	2

A. A. CROZIER.

Dep't Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

Exploration of San Domingo.

Baron Eggers has been engaged by the undersigned, and under the patronage of the Royal Academy of Sciences at Berlin, to undertake a journey of botanical research in the higher mountain regions of San Domingo that have not yet been explored. The plants to be collected will be distributed in two series with corresponding numbers. The first series will embrace only such plants as have not already been distributed in Eggers' *Flora Indiv occidentalis exsicc.*, and will cost forty marks per

hundred. The second (and larger) series will omit only the ubiquitous tropical species, especially those of the sea coast, and will cost thirty marks per hundred. The determinations will be elaborated by the undersigned, assisted by various monographers. He will be pleased to receive subscriptions to either series, but without prepayment. In view of the difficulties of transportation in the island, only a limited number of sets will be collected; and a prompt notification is requested from those who wish to subscribe.

DR. IGN. URBAN.

Friedenau bei Berlin, Germany.

A new lichen.

In 1886 I found a peculiar lichen on rocks in Catawba River. I sent it to Dr. J. W. Eckfeldt, of Philadelphia, and he to Mr. H. Willey, of New Bedford. The latter called it an *Opegrapha*. Lately I sent Mr. Willey better plants than he had seen, and he says it is not an *Opegrapha*, and has named it *Buellia Catawbensis*, n. sp. He gives the following description: Thallus thickish, squamulose, peltate, orbicular, about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch in diameter (I should say from $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{3}{8}$), sub-entire, white, beneath black and naked: apothecia innate-superficial, the disk even with the thallus, black, at length crowded and confluent in the center of the thallus: hypothecium black, the proper exciple deficient: paraphyses distinct, agglutinate: spores oblong-ellipsoid, 2-loc., brown, .015-18 mm. by .007-8 mm.—On rocks along Catawba River Landsford, S. C., *Prof. H. A. Green*, 1886. A singular plant without near affinity. Taken from "Introduction to the Study of Lichens," by H. Willey.

H. A. GREEN.

Chester, S. C.

CURRENT LITERATURE.

Physiological Botany: An abridgement of the student's guide to structural, morphological and physiological botany, by Robert Bentley, F. L. S. Prepared as a sequel to "Descriptive Botany," by Eliza A. Youmans. pp. xiv, 292. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1886.

If any single term is to be used for this book, it should be *structural* rather than physiological botany, for it deals mostly with anatomy, less than one-third being devoted to physiology. We can not see that it is properly a sequel to Miss Youmans' "Descriptive Botany," for, with the exception of the impracticable "popular flora" of that work, this one covers much the same ground. It is a book of the old style, a compendious mass of facts, essential and trivial, about structure and function, condensed to the last degree, and therefore more useful as a book of reference than as a text book. Viewed in that light, it has not been improved by abridgment. It is of the "old style," in that it has no open questions. Its dictum, *ex cathedra* alike on fact and hypothesis, leaves the student no reason to doubt that all questions are forever settled.

With the structural part we have little fault to find, except with the illustrations, which are very uneven in quality; a few good, the majority only tolerable, and some very poor. The statements are in the main